

dilation, inflation. And what is the result?—the lowering of the standard, the depreciation of currency. Let us diagnose the cause of this present complaint—the shortage of nurses. It is due to the fact that present conditions of work and prospects fail to attract the type of women which must be attracted to the profession if high standards are to be maintained; you are not going to attract such by this influx of *half* qualified. I will say this—that if you are going to permit this thing to happen—even if salaries are raised and hours of work reduced—you will lower the standard and the ideal which have always been the pride and glory of your calling. More and more will take up the abbreviated course, and it will become impossible to prevent those half-trained women from assuming the station and duties of the highly trained, to the danger of the patient and to the hurt of your profession. I trust that something will be done to prevent a situation which can only lead to a travesty of truth and injustice.

Support from Scotland.

Miss J. C. Cowie, R.G.N. (until recently Matron of the Royal Alexandra Infirmary, Paisley) introduced a good deal of humour into the proceedings in the course of her remarks in support of the Resolution, a humour evidently much understood and appreciated by her audience. She spoke of the inspiration of National Service. She spoke of the responsibility of the nurses in a matter like this, for, judging from the number on the Register, if they stood together, they could prevent this great wrong. Referring to the exploitation of the nurses, Miss Cowie said that the appointment of the Inter-Departmental Committee led to a great opportunity for reconstruction, but the first blow came when the Government refused to have upon it representatives of the nurses' organisations. A minority of nurses were put on, but they could not be regarded as free agents or as voicing the views of the nurses. Such an attitude to the nurses is not that of a free British democracy, but smacks of an authoritarian State. Miss Cowie made some forcible remarks calling upon medical men to support the nurses in their professional aims. To her the acid test of a doctor is whether he prefers the State Registered Nurse or the "born" nurse. (Laughter.) The whole question is an economic one. Give better salaries, better chances of promotion, and you will get the nurses. The half-qualified can be called hospital orderlies.

Miss Cowie said that she was proud to say that the Scottish Departmental Committee had rejected the lowering of standards, but here arises an anomaly—"Our half-trained Scottish Nurses could get themselves placed upon the English Roll and return to undercut our Registered Nurses."

Several members of the audience then spoke. Mrs. Iris Brook said that if the Recommendations relating to hours and salaries were put into operation there would be no shortage of nurses. Miss Coode and Miss Wenden, members of the College of Nursing, spoke in favour of establishing a Roll of Assistant Nurses, under the Nurses' Registration Act. Mrs. Reidy advised modification of the State Examinations if girls of a good type were to be attracted to the profession. Mr. Wells spoke of the danger to the public which a Roll of half-qualified women recognised by the State would be, and Miss Dunne emphasised a need for a greater loyalty to the nurses on the part of the medical profession. In replying Miss Macondald said that she agreed with Mrs. Brook that the adoption of the Recommendations for better salaries and shorter hours would help most materially to do away with the shortage. She regretted, however, that the Committee had recommended against legislation to establish such reforms and so to make them imperative, while, with regard to the introduction of unqualified competition from a State recognised Roll of unqualified women, this was to be firmly

established apparently by legislative action. As to the remarks of Miss Coode the speaker said that, as the College of Nursing had suggested the Recommendation for this Roll of Assistant Nurses to the Inter-Departmental Committee and were supporting it, she would suggest that the College compile the Roll itself.

The Resolution was read and put from the Chair and carried with acclamation. At this crowded meeting there were eight who voted against the Resolution representing the views of the College of Nursing.

RESOLUTION 2.

The Status of the Nursing Profession.

The Chairman then called upon Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, S.R.N., to propose the following Resolution: Mrs. Fenwick, on rising, said: Madam Chair, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, I earnestly commend the following Resolution to your consideration:

That this Meeting strongly deprecates the determined exclusion by the Government of Representatives of the Registered Nurses' Organisations (based on self-determination) on the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, set up to enquire into the position of persons in the Body Politic engaged in nursing the sick. Moreover, this Meeting demands that the privileges secured to the community by the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, shall be maintained in their entirety, providing for:—

1. The efficient standard of nursing for the sick;
2. The honourable status accorded to the Nursing Profession.

Mrs. Fenwick said: "The case against the degradation of the Nursing Profession has been so ably placed before you by previous speakers that my remarks will be brief. I note in the press that I have been described as 'a fiery old lady of 82.' If the writer concludes that in spite of my advanced age I have still the energy to protest against a great wrong, I thank him for the compliment. British justice demands that no person shall be condemned unheard, and the determined exclusion from the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services of representatives of Nurses' organisations, whose opinions were known to be in convinced opposition to the amendment of the Nurses' Registration Act for the admission to a Roll of untrained persons, presupposes that the Government realised that an agreed Report would never be signed unless those in opposition to its policy of professional depreciation were excluded.

"The policy of the Inter-Departmental Committee in this connection is, in my opinion, the most cynical violation of morality in nursing history. I invite you to express your determination not to submit to it.

"(1) The efficient standard of Nursing, as provided for in the Nurses' Registration Act, includes: A right to knowledge to qualify Registered Nurses as skilled participants in the ever-rising standards of medical and surgical treatment, which demands systematic teaching, training and test by examination. This claim is made from a sincere sense of duty to humanity, which it is our honourable privilege to serve.

"(2) The Act also provides for honourable professional status for Registered Nurses. In the past the Nursing Staff was never mentioned, now it receives honourable recognition and thanks as a component part of hospital service. The work of the Medical and Nursing Schools are interdependent for the benefit of the patients. No hospital can take first rank which fails to recognise the principle of united medical and nursing service for the benefit of the sick.

"The greater the prestige of a profession, the more popular it becomes. Nursing needs women of high intelligence and lofty character. Such women will decline in the future to enter a profession in which their status has been

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